

To: To whom it may concern

By post

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Dear whom it may concern

Expert Report on the External Wall System at Eastgate, Station Approach, Woking GU22 7PQ (the "**Building**")

1. Background

- 1.1. I, Steve Cooper of Malcolm Hollis LLP, am a Chartered Fire Engineer with over 30 years' experience, including 10 years in the fire service.
- 1.2. On 04 November 2019, I attended the Building and witnessed the opening-up of areas of the external façade in order to determine compliance with Building Regulations.
- 1.3. The opening-up of the external façade was carried out by contractors appointed by Southern Housing Group, under the instructions of myself and an architectural expert. Access for the inspection of the external façade was by means of a mobile elevating work platform.

2. Findings

I confirm the following findings:

- 2.1. The external wall **insulation system** ("EWI System") of the Building comprises approximately **125mm of expanded polystyrene foam insulation ("EPS"), which is combustible and, to be acceptable, should have been of limited combustibility.** The EPS is chemically bonded (glued) to the underlying concrete or blockwork external wall of the building. On the external face of the

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Regulated by RICS

EPS is a render containing a polymeric fibre mesh. This render is again chemically bonded to the face of the EPS.

- 2.2. At the time of construction, this type of system was commonly used as it was a very effective way to improve the thermal insulation of the walls, but following the Grenfell Tower fire, all such external insulation systems have come under closer scrutiny.
- 2.3. This system is NOT the same as that used on Grenfell Tower and there is no suggestion that it is as dangerous as the aluminium composite panels that were used to clad that building.
- 2.4. The building has a floor that is over 18 metres above ground level. This means that for this system to be acceptable at the time the building was constructed, it should have been tested as part of a complete system to the required large-scale fire standard (known as BS 8414) and shown to meet the required performance criteria (known as BR135). There is no evidence that this EWI system has ever been successfully tested to these standards and, given the combustibility of the EPS insulation, I do not consider it likely that the system would pass the test in any event.
- 2.5. In view of the above, I consider that the EWI System does not meet relevant requirements and will need to be removed and replaced with a system that complies with current Building Regulations and that uses only materials that meet the higher standard of being of limited combustibility.
- 2.6. I recommend that an architect be commissioned to develop detailed remediation proposals.

Yours faithfully



Steve Cooper  
Partner